

ABSTRACT

A step-down power transfer device for providing a dropped drive line in a front engine and rear drive vehicle. The step-down power transfer device is preferably chain or gear driven. A preferred vehicle includes a power train having a longitudinally mounted front engine, a step-down power transfer device, a single segment drive shaft, a half-shaft differential, swing axles and geared reduction wheel end drives. The vehicle can have an exceptionally low, i.e., 16 to 18 inches, load floor that is flat at least between the step-down power transfer device and the differential. The resultant vehicle has many parts in common with popular traditional front engine/rear drive trucks. Combining the power train described above with a low profile rear suspension provides added low load floor benefits.